

**AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT**

Please cancel the current Abstract and replace it with the following new Abstract:

The invention relates to a method of marking a datagram that is forwarded over an IP communications network by routers, which method comprises references in the fields of the datagram. When a datagram is received by a router, the router reads a reference entered in the datagram and looks up said reference in a reference table stored in the router. If the reference is not contained in the reference table, the router selects a new reference from the table. The references can correspond to routes between the router and a datagram receiver terminal. The selection of a route reference can take account of a load value assigned to said route.